Title
Aucassin & Nicolette: being a love story translated out of the ancient French by Andrew Lang

Author
DESCRIPTION:

General Remarks
The tale of Aucassin and Nicolette originates in the 13th century and is a medieval story that is told in alternating narrative and song form. This prose/verse format is referred to as a chantefable (song-story). The medieval manuscript is owned by the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Français 2168) and is the only surviving example of this medieval genre. The author is unknown. A digitized copy of this manuscript can be accessed online at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9058947p.r=D%27AUCASIN+ET+DE+NICOLETE.langEN>.

Since the discovery of the chantefable in the 18th century by Jean-Baptiste de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye, many versions of this text have been published through the years. This is a late 19th century printed Roycroft text of Aucassin and Nicolette as translated by Andrew Lang. The University of Cincinnati owns a small collection of Roycroft bindings that have undergone conservation treatment by Richard C. Baker. However, this binding is still in need of conservation.

Binding
The original binding was a light brown limp suede binding with yapp edges and a blind stamped title with gold decoration, but is now lost. A panel of the front cover that contains the stamped title survives. The panel was most likely cut from the original cover and retained for rebinding.

Textblock
The textblock is sewn on two single recessed cords, through the fold of twelve gatherings. The textblock spine is coated with a layer of brown adhesive but unlined otherwise. There is a yellow cloth ribbon marker adhered to the head of the spine. The pastedowns consist of a yellow silk doublure. The silk is drummed onto a thin board via turn-ins. The doublure is hinged onto a tipped-on folio that makes up the flyleaf.

Primary Support
The textblock paper and tipped-on endleaves are a thick, light beige, handmade wove paper with deckled edges and a characteristic Roycroft watermark.

Medium
The text is mostly composed of black printed ink but also contains red and green printed text. There are red,
green, yellow, blue, pink, gold, purple, and brown decorated initials.

**Attachments | Inserts**
There is a red library stamp with red pen ink on the fly leaf recto that reads, April 17th, 1972 g.

**Housing**
No prior housing

**CONDITION:**

**Summary**
Overall, the book is in fair condition. The textblock spine is exposed because the cover is lost. The opening is stiff due to brittle spine adhesive. The detached leather cover panel is actively degrading from red rot and in danger of becoming lost.

**Binding**
Lab records indicate the original bindings in the Roycroft collection were disintegrating into pieces and had been oiled, causing unsightly streaky stains. The condition of this binding is unknown with no photographic record.

**Textblock**
The spine adhesive is stiff and brittle. The sewing is strong and intact. While acidic and fragile, the silk doublures are in good condition without any damage.

**Primary Support**
The flyleaves have discolored to dark brown from prolonged contact with the acidic silk doublures. Additionally, there is yellow offsetting on the paper on page opening 44-45 caused by the cloth page marker.

**Medium**
Excellent condition.

**Housing**

**Housing Narrative**
No prior housing.

**Attachments | Inserts**
Red ink is stable.

**Previous Treatment**
The original leather cover was removed from the textblock in preparation for treatment in 2010, which was not completed. The stamped title was cut out from the leather and retained, intended for recessing in a new leather binding.

**Materials Analysis**
The original suede fragment severely darkens to black when consolidated with 3 % Klucel G in ethanol. However, the leather must be consolidated on the verso in order to apply adhesive for inlaying. Lascaux 498 HV alone will not penetrate the friable leather.

**TREATMENT:**

Tuesday, August 18, 2015
Proposal
1. Reduce brittle spine adhesive and reline with wheat starch paste and kozo tissue.
2. After referencing the other Hubbard bindings treated by Richard Baker, select a leather similar in appearance to the original and to the collection for rebinding.
3. Inlay the original leather title into the new limp leather binding and recase.

Housing Need
Tuxedo Box

Factors Influencing Treatment
The binding contains inherently acidic silk doublures that will continue to damage the adjacent paper coming in contact.

Performed Treatment
1. The spine adhesive was softened with a methyl cellulose poultice and was mechanically reduced from both the spine and the edges of the pastedowns. The spine was relined with wheat starch paste and Uso Mino kozo tissue. [AS, 2 hrs]
2. The other UC Hubbard bindings that were treated by Richard Baker were examined. Other copies of the Aucassin and Nicolete Roycroft bindings with the original suede bindings were also referenced online. A brown calf skin (similar in tone to other original Aucassin and Nicolete bindings) was selected for treatment. [AS, 30 min]
3. A model of the historic binding was made to practice leather inlaying and treatment techniques. [AS, 6 hrs]
4. A new suede limp binding with yapp edges was constructed in a similar fashion to the other Hubbard bindings made by Richard Baker. [AS, 1 hr]
5. The verso of the original stamped suede fragment was consolidated with 3% Klucel G in ethanol. The edges of the leather were pared. [AS, 30 min]
6. The original leather title was inlaid into the new limp leather suede binding. The inlay was backed with a light brown Moriki kozo tissue. All were adhered with Lascaux HV 498. [AS, 15 min]
7. The acidic silk doublures were encapsulated in polyester pockets to prevent the silk from further offsetting and degrading the adjacent flyleaves overtime. The polyester pockets were non-adhesively fastened together with interlocking corners, such as those made for limp vellum bindings. The pocket edges were constructed to cover and protect the silk turn-ins. The three folded polyester turn-ins were adhered to a sheet of kozo fibered tissue and wheat starch paste to keep the pocket flat against the cover. This measure was taken to help prevent the pockets and textblock from possibly pulling away from the cover when handled. [AS, 2 hrs]
8. The textblock was drummed onto the new limp leather case by adhering the leather to the turn-ins of the polyester pockets with Lascaux HV 498. This prevented the silk from coming into contact with any adhesive while still firmly adhering the leather to the doublures. [AS, 15 min]

Housing Provided
Tuxedo Box

Housing Narrative
Constructed out of 20 pt. board. [AS, 30 min]

Storage Recommendations and Handling notes
The original suede inlay is severely suffering from red rot. The recto of the stamped upper cover fragment was not consolidated in order to prevent darkening of the suede and altering the soft texture. As a result, the suede will most likely continue to powder overtime. It is recommended to hold the binding by the new suede when handled.

TOTAL Treatment Time 13 hrs
During Treatment, During Treatment

Detail of interlocking corner

Roylecraft